



## Town of Westfield Residential Curbside Recycling Changes Frequently Asked Questions



### What are the key changes in our residential recycling program?

Several key changes were recently made to Westfield's residential curbside recycling program.

- No plastic bags of any kind will be accepted.
- Shredded paper is no longer accepted.
- Containerizing your recycling at the curb is highly encouraged to minimize moisture contamination.

### Why are these changes being made?

The recycling industry is currently undergoing many serious changes that are affecting curbside single stream collection. China, the primary market for America's recyclables, has recently placed a ban on 24 different types of plastics, and has also put strict quality standards on recycling.

Contamination levels have reached 20-25% of all curbside recycling materials; contamination occurs when items that don't belong in your home's recycling bin are placed there. When contaminants end up in recyclables, they have the potential to turn the entire load into trash and increase processing costs. As a result, changes are necessary to improve the quality of collectible curbside recyclables.

### Who made the decision about these changes?

The elimination of plastic bags and shredded paper was mandated at the County level to address the significant, shifting dynamics of the recycling industry. Our vendor, Giordano Company, is also moving toward the elimination of plastic types #3-#7 as recyclable items, but will continue to honor the collection of these items in Westfield for the duration of the Town's contract through the end of 2018.

### When did the changes go into effect?

The changes were effective June 4.

### How were the changes communicated to residents?

The Town was made aware of these changes on June 4, the date of their implementation, and has been in close communication with our vendor and the County to clarify details for our residents. We have relayed the changes on our website, social media accounts and at the June 5 Town Council meeting (covered by local print media). We then sent out additional information to every Westfield resident in the June estimated tax bill.

### Can all acceptable recycling be mixed in the same container?

Yes. All acceptable items may be co-mingled in the same container, which should be at least 32 gallons and clearly marked "recycling." Items may not be placed in plastic bags.

### What if I don't use a container?

The use of a lidded container is strongly recommended. Once materials are wet or contain moisture, they will not be accepted.

### Why weren't we notified sooner of these changes?

The Town was made aware of these changes on June 4, the date of their implementation. We have been in close communication with the County and our vendor since then to obtain as much clarity and detail as possible to relay to Westfield residents.

**Are these changes exclusive to Westfield?**

No. Many communities across the country face similar changes due to the ongoing significant shifts in the recycling industry.

**How can I identify which types of plastics are now accepted?**

Most plastics have a small triangle on the bottom, with a number inside. Our initial information relayed that types 1 and 2 continue to be recyclable, whereas 3-7 are no longer recyclable. However, our vendor, Giordano Company, will continue to pick-up all plastics (#1-#7, no Styrofoam) for the duration of its contract with the Town, through the end of 2018. Residents should expect additional changes and limitations on recyclable plastic over the longer term.

**How clean does a container need to be before recycling it?**

Containers should be rinsed and empty of all food. They do not need to be thoroughly washed. Cardboard boxes should be free of any and all packing material.

**Are any types of plastic bags accepted?**

No. Plastic bags (blue, clear, black, even those marketed as “recycling bags”) are not compatible with the machines that sort recyclables at the processing facility and are therefore not compliant with updated guidelines.

Many stores accept plastic bags for recycling at in-store collection bins, including Stop and Shop, Lowe’s, Shop Rite, Target, Walmart, Wegmans, and Whole Foods. For a complete list, visit [www.plasticfilmrecycling.com](http://www.plasticfilmrecycling.com).

**How can I dispose of shredded paper if it’s no longer recyclable?**

Shredded paper should be placed in the trash. If you have paper to shred, consider utilizing one of the County’s Mobile Paper Shredding events (full schedule is available on [www.ucnj.org/recycling](http://www.ucnj.org/recycling)). Dry paper that has not been shredded is still acceptable in curbside recycling.

**What additional resources are available?**

- Westfield residents may bring their recyclables to the Conservation Center during its regular hours of operation. No permit is necessary. In addition to accepting recyclable paper products and glass, plastic, and metal containers, the Conservation Center accepts electronic waste, textiles, and scrap metal. For more information, please visit: [www.westfieldnj.gov/conservation](http://www.westfieldnj.gov/conservation).
- For additional information about our recycling vendor’s efforts, please refer to Giordano’s website ([www.gogreengiordano.com](http://www.gogreengiordano.com)), call their hotline (1-800-216-2250, ext. 2), or email them ([service@gogreengiordano.com](mailto:service@gogreengiordano.com)).
- For Union County recycling information, including options for scrap metal, electronics, batteries and other materials, please visit [www.ucnj.org/recycling](http://www.ucnj.org/recycling).
- For additional resources that include local recycling schedules and guidelines, reminders, and broader recycling industry information, download the free Recycling Coach app to your phone.
- The Town of Westfield, in partnership with CurbMyClutter, offers a program that picks up used clothing and electronics from your doorstep. For more information, visit [www.curbmyclutter.com](http://www.curbmyclutter.com).

**Great news!** The Town of Westfield applied for a generous grant from the County of Union to continue the expansion of recycling opportunities - including batteries, fluorescent bulbs, and many forms of Styrofoam - at the Conservation Center. The Town recently received notice that the grant has been approved and is looking forward to providing these expanded recycling opportunities for our residents in the near future.